

German astronaut to make second space trip

July 20 2006

The European Space Agency says Hans Schlegel of Germany will fly on the October 2007 space shuttle mission to the International Space Station.

ESA Director General Jean-Jacques Dordain announced the assignment Thursday during German Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to ESA's Space Operations Center in Darmstadt, Germany.

Veteran NASA astronaut Stephen Frick is scheduled to command the STS-122 Shuttle mission, with U.S. Navy Cmdr. Alan Poindexter serving as pilot. Mission specialists will include Air Force Col. Rex Walheim, Stanley Love and Leland Melvin.

Poindexter, Love and Melvin will be making their first spaceflight. Schlegel, a member of the European Astronaut Corps since 1998, first flew on shuttle mission STS-55 in 1993.

Schlegel will be involved in the installation and initial commissioning of ESA's Columbus laboratory -- the first European laboratory devoted to long-term research in space.

The ESA said three spacewalks are scheduled during STS-122. The first will help to install and power-up Columbus. A second EVA will serve to install the external payloads. The third EVA will involve installing a nitrogen tank assembly on the ISS.

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Citation: German astronaut to make second space trip (2006, July 20) retrieved 25 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-07-german-astronaut-space.html>

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